

**1        WHAT IS CLAIMED IS**

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1. A semiconductor device, comprising:  
a substrate;  
a gate oxide film formed on said substrate;  
a gate electrode provided on said gate oxide  
film;  
first and second diffusion regions  
respectively formed in said substrate at each lateral  
side of said gate electrode;  
said gate electrode including a first region  
located right underneath said gate electrode and a  
second region adjacent to said first region, said  
first and second regions containing N atoms with  
respective concentrations such that said second region  
contains N with a higher concentration as compared  
with said first region.

2. A semiconductor device as claimed in  
claim 1, wherein said N atoms are distributed in said  
gate oxide film with a depth profile such that said  
depth profile has a peak in the vicinity of an  
interface between said gate oxide film and said  
substrate.

3. A semiconductor device as claimed in  
claim 1, wherein said gate oxide film contains said N  
atoms in said second region with a concentration level

1 of at least about 0.5%.

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4. A semiconductor device as claimed in  
claim 1, wherein said gate oxide film contains said N  
atoms in said second region with a concentration level  
of at least about 1%.

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5. A semiconductor device as claimed in  
15 claim 1, wherein said gate oxide film contains said N  
atoms in said second region with a concentration level  
of at least about 2%.

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6. A method of fabricating a semiconductor  
device, comprising the steps of:  
forming a gate oxide film on a substrate;  
25 forming a gate electrode pattern on said  
gate oxide film; and  
introducing N atoms into said gate oxide  
film while using said gate electrode pattern as a  
mask.

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7. A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein  
35 said step of introducing N atoms into said gate oxide  
film comprises a thermal annealing process of said  
gate oxide film conducted in an atmosphere containing

1 N atoms.

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C 8. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein  
said atmosphere contains NO and said thermal annealing  
process is conducted at a temperature of about 800°C.

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Subt C<sup>2</sup> 9. A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein  
said atmosphere contains N<sub>2</sub>O and said thermal

15 annealing process is conducted at a temperature of  
about 900°C.

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*Said* 10. A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein  
said step of introducing N atoms into said gate oxide  
film includes an ion implantation process of N ions.

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11. A method as claimed in claim 10,  
wherein said ion implantation process is carried out  
30 under an acceleration voltage of not exceeding about  
10 keV.

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12. A method as claimed in claim 10,  
wherein said ion implantation process is carried out

1. with a dose of about  $1 - 3 \times 10^{14} \text{ cm}^{-2}$ .

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13. A method as claimed in claim 6, further comprising the step of forming diffusion regions at both lateral sides of said gate electrode pattern by introducing impurity elements into said substrate through said gate oxide film while using said gate electrode pattern as a mask, and wherein said step of introducing impurity elements is conducted prior to said step of introducing N atoms into said gate oxide film.

14. A semiconductor device, comprising:

a substrate;

a gate oxide film formed on said substrate;

a gate electrode provided on said gate oxide film;

side wall layers respectively disposed on

each lateral side of said gate electrode;

first and second impurity regions

respectively formed in said substrate at each lateral side of said gate electrode, which is substantially aligned the edges thereof;

first and second lightly doped impurity regions respectively formed in said substrate at each outer lateral side of said side wall layers, which is substantially aligned the edges thereof;

said gate electrode including a first region

disposed right underneath said gate electrode and a second region adjacent to said first region, said first and second regions containing N atoms with

1 respective concentrations such that said second region contains N with a higher concentration as compared with said first region.

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